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LABOUR  
BOOKLETS  
No. 8

Military  
Preparations  
for the  
Great War

FACT *versus* FICTION

By

E. D. MOREL

Author of

"Ten Years of Secret Diplomacy," "Truth and  
the War," "Diplomacy Revealed," etc.

PRICE 6d.

1922

The LABOUR PUBLISHING Co. Ltd.  
6 TAVISTOCK SQUARE  
LONDON



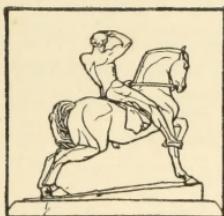
# MILITARY PREPARATIONS FOR THE GREAT WAR

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## INTRODUCTION

“AMONGST the many false impressions that prevailed when, after the lapse of a century, we found ourselves involved in a great war, not the least erroneous is the belief that we were not prepared for it. Whether the scale on which we prepared was as large as the signs of the times called for, whether we did right to cling to our long-tried system of a small army and a large navy, are questions that will long be debated; but, given the scale which we deliberately chose to adopt, there is no doubt that the machinery for setting our forces in action *had reached an ordered completeness in detail that has no parallel in our history*” (*History of the Great War based on Official Documents*. By Direction of the Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defence. *Naval Operations*. By Sir Julian Corbett. Longmans Green & Co.).

“To say, therefore, that we were caught unprepared is inaccurate” (*Before the War*. By Viscount Haldane).

Perhaps I may be pardoned a personal allusion by way of introduction to the story which is developed in the ensuing pages. In the nature of the case I cannot well avoid it. For while many others besides myself perceived, even in the early days of the war, the object with which the dogma of a German “plot” to explain the catastrophe was foisted upon the British public, I think I have stood pretty well alone in a methodical and *continuous exposure* of that national fraud. During the war I endeavoured, by the presentation of masses of correlated facts in such publications as *Truth and the War*, *Ten Years of Secret Diplomacy*, and in many pamphlets of which the best known is *Tsardom’s Part in the War*, to prevent, by a dissemination of the truth about the war’s origins, the disaster of a “Peace” of vengeance founded upon a falsehood, and destructive, therefore, of all the hopes of a new era arising from the protracted horrors of the struggle. And since the war ended with precisely the kind of “Peace” which I had feared, because founded (avowedly) upon the very falsehood I had laboured to destroy, I have continued, in such works as *Diplomacy Revealed*, *Pre-War Diplomacy*, and in innumerable articles, the task which I had begun within twenty-four hours of the outbreak. This attitude has drawn down upon me a storm of criticism. But that is neither here nor there.

Let it, however, be well understood that in nothing I have ever said or written on this subject have I sought to clear Germany of a share of responsibility for the war. What I have done has been to demonstrate that her share was a share only ; that the alleged German "plot" against the liberties of Europe and the British Empire was nonsense, and dangerous nonsense, insomuch as it served to obscure the transactions of certain Cabinet Ministers with France and Russia which had been deliberately concealed from the nation, and by which the national fortunes had become entangled, through the Chauvinistic elements in France, with the most corrupt and wicked Government in the world—that of Imperial Russia ; that there was no valid evidence of German "premeditation," and a great deal of presumptive evidence of Russian "premeditation" ; and that to reject overtures for a cessation of hostilities by Conference, and to prolong the war in order to enforce terms of conquest and spoliation upon the enemy States on the ground that their rulers were solely responsible for the war, was an outrage upon the peoples of those States, upon the British people, and upon all Europe.

The revelations of the past three years, preceded by the disclosure of the Secret Treaties concluded between the Allied Powers for the division of loot, have shown that the views I exposed were accurate. No one who is acquainted with recent evidence—and it accumulates every day—can now contend that the Great War was deliberately planned by Germany. Much will be found in that evidence to prove that it was deliberately planned by the Russian Tsardom. On the other hand, even the blindest are beginning to perceive the economic and political results of the Versailles Treaty.

Nevertheless the legend of Germany's sole responsibility is maintained in order to save the political skins of certain eminent persons in Britain and in France, and continues to be the proclaimed justification of the Versailles Treaty.

Now, while this legend continues to be treated by the Governments (or their successors) victorious in the Great War, as "*Chose jugée*" (to quote Mr Lloyd George), as, in fact, the justification—and the only justification—for the Versailles Treaty which they have woven into the fabric of European law, **the world will not know peace.** And, primarily, the world will not know peace until this legend is destroyed, not because of the economic effects to which it has given and will continue to give rise, but because of its moral and psychological effects.

There is a striking passage in a recent letter by Mr Gilbert

Cannan in *The Freeman* of New York in which that writer expresses himself thus about the late war:

"It has been called a war, even a Great War, and the war to end war; but the essential occupation has been debauchery, and that a few million men have been killed and wounded is incidental: debauchery of mind, body and spirit, and without some very deep expiation there can be no recovery.

It is this debauchery of the mind and spirit which, in my humble judgment, is the gravest of all dangers which threatens what is finest in the British character. Mentally and spiritually we have been fed on lies for eight years, and the result is distressing. Not since the days of Walpole has political corruption been so rife and so unashamed. And the public indifference to it is a graver sign than the corruption itself. The heart and centre of this "debauchery"—to use Mr Cannan's expression—lies in the fact that our soldiers fought the war and went through all its agonies in a mist of mendacity created by our politicians. Different people interpret patriotism in different ways.

Personally I fail to understand the patriotism which does not resent a betrayal of the people, especially when that betrayal involves the people in unspeakable suffering.

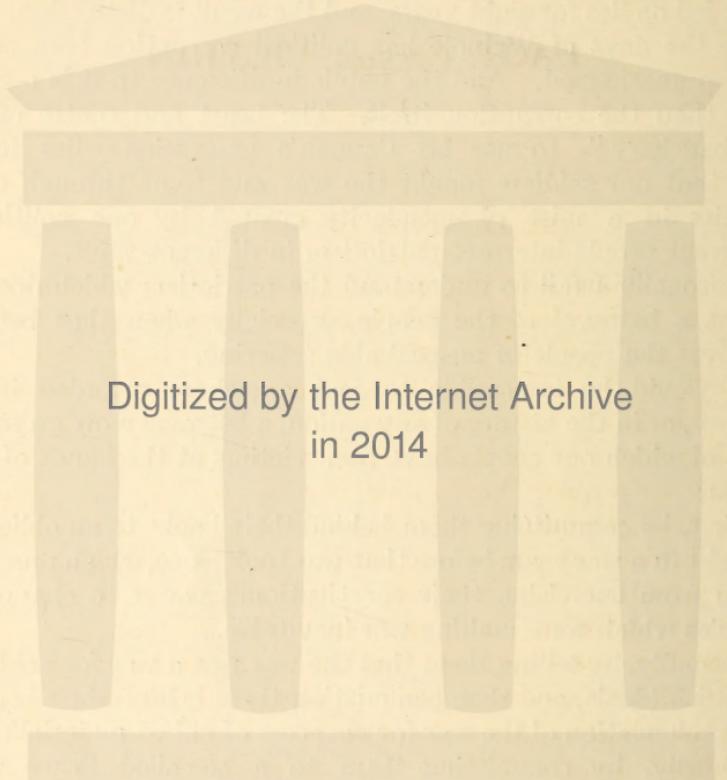
It would be impossible to find anywhere recorded in our history, or in the history of any nation, a betrayal more gross than that of which our people have been victims at the hands of their rulers:

First, by committing them behind their backs to an obligation to fight in a war years before that war took place, which prevented them from exercising their constitutional power to change the policies which were making war inevitable.

Secondly, by telling them that the war was a war for noble and unselfish ideals, and then committing them behind their backs to the prolongation of the war for purposes of naked materialism.

Thirdly, by committing them to a so-called Peace which murdered the ideals for which they had believed themselves to be fighting, and has inflicted upon them grievous material injuries.

Fourthly, and worst of all, perhaps, by imbuing their minds with a perversion of the truth.



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# Military Preparations for the Great War

## FACT *versus* FICTION

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### I

#### THE PENALTIES OF FALSEHOOD

WHEN a national and international policy is pursued which has its origin in an historical falsehood, the national body and the international body alike suffer. Falsehood begets falsehood. To protect the original falsehood from exposure, numberless other falsehoods must be forthcoming. Public acts of a far-reaching character are rendered inevitable because of the original and the subsequent buttressing falsehoods. A vested interest of the most powerful kind conceivable comes into existence, the vested interest of personal reputations and of Party political ties in perpetuating the falsehood. Good intentions, which under different conditions could achieve much, are paralysed either because this vested interest appears too powerful to assault, or because the possessors of good intentions are themselves caught up in the wheel of this vested interest. Faith in the sincerity of public men decays. After a time public life becomes poisoned. The public life of Europe is morally poisoned, and our public life, which cannot be divorced from that of Europe, is poisoned by this colossal falsehood of a German war "plot," of Germany the "criminal nation," to justify the Great Iniquity which is termed the Versailles "Peace."

The Versailles Treaty is destroying Europe. It is destroying our foreign trade. It is undermining our industrial position. It is the chief cause of the unemployment which is inflicting such grievous hardships upon millions of our countrymen; which is involving the country in heavy unproductive expenditure, driving up taxation and imperilling the financial stability of the

State. These effects are not temporary and passing. They are co-existent with the duration of the Treaty—and the Treaty is the Executive law of Europe. The Treaty of Versailles means the stabilisation of a latent state of war in Europe, the grip of militarism upon the human sinews of Europe. It means a certain renewed eruption of war's volcano. The idea that you can divide Europe into saints and sinners is preposterous. But that is what the Treaty does. According to the existing Executive law of Europe, every man, woman and child in Germany to-day is a sinner, and must tender account for their sin ; and for a quarter of a century every babe that is born in Germany will be born into political sin, and is to be so treated. The new generation in Germany is condemned to grow up with the stigma of political sin branded on its forehead. The German poor, the German working classes, the German professional classes will pay the heaviest price for this inheritance of political sin, for in the present conditions of society there will always be, in Germany as elsewhere, elements that will profit from the general lowering of human conditions which the Treaty imposes.

#### A MORAL CANKER AND ITS EFFECTS

But the moral canker which the Treaty introduces into the life of Europe is the most demoralising feature in the whole black business. Consider our own case in relation to it ; for although in practical politics we cannot divorce our affairs from those of our neighbours, it is our affairs which chiefly concern us. It is a horrible thing that our national policy should be based upon, and vitiated by, a falsehood—by a falsehood which is known to be such by those who are responsible for conducting that policy. The moral consequences are everywhere visible for those who have eyes to see. We are compelled to act wrongly because we deem ourselves compelled to maintain the falsehood. Not a single British politician concerned in the diplomacy preceding the war but is aware, and has all along been aware, that the German “plot” was an invention to rouse our people to the required pitch of endurance. Yet not one of them—if we except Mr Lloyd George, whose public statements alter in accordance with his estimate of the direction in which the political wind is blowing<sup>1</sup>—has moved an inch from his original public position.

<sup>1</sup> Thus on December 23rd, 1920, the Prime Minister gave away the whole case for the German “plot.” He said : “The more one reads *Memoirs* and books written in the various countries of what happened before August 1st, 1914, the more one realises that no one at the head of affairs quite

'They are all choked by the falsehood which they have forced down the throat of the public. One and all they allowed the Versailles Treaty to be perpetrated without a protest, and their belated and futile remonstrances were only heard when the material effects of the Treaty upon British industrial life were such that personal popularity would not be endangered by joining in the general grumble. Not one of them has admitted that the thesis of the German "plot" is no longer tenable in view of the evidence of the past three years. Not one of them has condemned the Treaty as a moral wrong. Not one of them has had the courage of Signor Nitti, the ex-Prime Minister of Italy, when he writes :

" That statement (Germany's sole responsibility) which we all made during the war was a weapon to be used at the time ; now that the war is over it cannot be looked upon as a serious argument."

And again :

" When our countries were engaged in the struggle, and we were at grips with a dangerous enemy, it was our duty to keep up the morale of our people, and to paint our adversaries in the darkest colours, laying on their shoulders all the blame and responsibility for the war. But after the great world conflict, now that Imperial Germany has fallen, it would be absurd to maintain that the responsibility of the war is solely and wholly attributable to Germany, and that earlier than 1914 in Europe there had not developed a state of things finally destined to culminate in war."

The acknowledgment is courageous and must be embarrassing for Signor Nitti's *ex-colleagues*. The admission, too, is interesting. Statesmen can lie to their people during a war with a clear conscience. It is right for them to do so, apparently. But if they had not lied for so long and with such effrontery, the war might have closed two years before it did, and millions of human lives have been spared. Such are the accepted standards of love of country, commonly termed "patriotism." The common people are its dupes and victims alike. At any rate the Italian statesman is far in advance of Mr Asquith, Lord Grey, Lord Haldane, Mr Lloyd George, Mr Winston Churchill and the lesser luminaries who have shared the privilege of controlling in turn the destinies

meant war at that stage. It was something into which they glided or rather staggered and stumbled, perhaps through folly ; and a discussion, I have no doubt, would have averted it." Attacked in France, attacked by *The Times*, he, a little more than two months later, asserted that Germany's culpability must be "treated by the Allies as a *chose jugée*." It was "the basis upon which the structure of the Treaty of Versailles has been erected, and if that acknowledgment is repudiated or abandoned the Treaty is destroyed." Such is the frivolity with which the Prime Minister treats issues of international politics.

of the British people for the past decade. It is rather humiliating that we should have to go to Rome to find moral courage among statesmen of the front rank.

#### THE NEUTRALISATION OF GOODWILL

And observe how this persistent refusal to deal with falsehood enfeebles and even neutralises the many elements and influences in Britain making for international reconciliation and reconstruction. There are immense forces instinctively enlisted on the right side among us—more probably than in any other nation. The greatest of them is the British Labour movement. The driving force which permeates the Labour movement—let cynics scoff as they will—is a much deeper and a finer thing than mere Party or mere power. It is to make a better and a more decent world for men and women to live in. Now, although many individuals prominent in the Councils of the Labour Party have repudiated the myth of Germany the solely guilty nation in the war, none more forcibly than Mr F. W. Jowett, the Chairman of the Edinburgh Party Conference this year; and although the great mass of working-class opinion has long ceased to believe in the German “plot,” the Labour Party, as such, has, up to the present, not faced the issue—an issue which, nevertheless, overshadows the whole international situation. And among Liberals or liberal-minded men outside the ranks of Labour, hardly any have had the courage to do so. A brilliant exception is Mr H. W. Massingham; another, Mr J. A. Hobson; a third, Professor Raymond Beazley; a fourth, Mr Austin Harrison. Mr G. P. Gooch, too, has to some extent identified himself with them. Not a solitary cleric of any eminence has ranged himself on the side of truth. Dean Inge appears to be moving in that direction, judging from his sermon at St Paul’s on the International Peace Conference day, but with all the traditional circumspection of the profession which he adorns.

What is the true explanation of the reluctance of the Labour Party, as a Party, to throw its great weight into the scales? It is suggested that some of its most prominent leaders committed themselves so deeply to the orthodox standpoint during the war that they cannot now retrace their steps. But surely that, if it be a true explanation, indicates a short view. Those leaders acted in perfect good faith. They were not responsible for the diplomacy which preceded the war. They had nothing to do with it. They knew nothing about it. They only knew the facts as presented to them. Their protests against the Versailles

Treaty have been continuous. But those protests lack the power they would possess if based primarily upon the moral wrong done to a whole nation, from which the economic results suffered by our people necessarily flow. The notion that a prominent public man weakens his position by the admission of error is a profound psychological miscalculation, especially when the error is one which nine-tenths of the country shared, and which had everything to excuse it. The Labour Party is absolutely untarred by the falsehoods, subterfuges, concealments and intrigues which hang like a dead weight upon the older Parties in this matter. It would strengthen its moral and political position enormously if it admitted quite frankly that, in the light of the mass of evidence forthcoming since the war closed, the national judgment must be revised.

#### THE LABOUR PARTY AND THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS UNION

What is the central truth of this affair? Judged by the standards of the religion of Christ which is nationally professed, or by the standards of the religion of humanity, or by the ethical and moral standards which lie deep down in the consciousness of the mass of men, by whatever name you care to call them, the Versailles Treaty is an outrage; a moral throwback. But once it is recognised that the sentence pronounced upon the German people and the German State—the political mutilations, the economic strangulations and servitudes, the invasion of sovereign rights, the filching of Colonies and merchant shipping, the unilateral disarmament, the expropriation of private property, the seizure of the belongings of humble individuals living quietly and peaceably in the Allied States and Colonies, the gross breach of faith involved in the departure from the Armistice terms, the intolerable tyrannies and vexations operating in occupied territory—when it is realised that that sentence justifies itself upon an historical falsehood, then the outrage becomes a crime of unprecedented magnitude. It is this which our people must grasp if decency is to be re-introduced into European relations; if the future is to be looked at without apprehension. What force better able to inculcate the truth than that embodied in the Labour Party, which, if its guiding principles be not inspired by the ideal of international brotherhood, is a mere dead thing. If the British Labour Party made itself the medium through which this central truth could be brought home to the national and to the universal conscience, it would assume the moral leadership of the world, and the solution of its own home problems would be

facilitated rather than hampered. Those of its present leaders whose previous attitude is supposedly an obstacle to action of this kind would gain, not lose, in personal prestige.

Then take the League of Nations Union. There is any amount of goodwill there. But so long as its leaders insist that Germany's sole responsibility for the war is "*chose jugée*," and that modern history begins with the Versailles Treaty, what real contribution can the Union, or the League itself for that matter, make to the healing of the world? The very term "League of Nations" is a meaningless one so long as one of the greatest nations in Europe is treated as a criminal, branded with the seal of infamy before posterity, and sentenced to penal servitude for a crime which was collective! No one doubts the sincerity of Lord Robert Cecil's desire that the existing League of Nations should become an effective instrument for ensuring the peace of the world, instead of being an instrument for registering the decrees of victorious States. What amazes one is his apparent belief that it can become what he would wish it to become when an historical falsehood is the foundation of its structure, a foundation which he has not moved a finger to undermine, although one cannot suppose him ignorant of the evidence of the past three years.

#### THE PLEA OF IRRELEVANCE

A last word to those, a diminishing quantity, who would still dismiss this great debate on the ground that it is irrelevant to the problems with which Europe is confronted. What is the use—they say, in effect—of arguing over the origins of the war? What is the use of discussing "who began it"? That is not the issue. The issue is, how can we get out of the mess? These persons resemble a man who has fallen into a pit from which he can only escape by the use of a ladder of which he declines to avail himself. It is not, and never has been, a question of "Who began it?" It is a question of whether there is to be any ending to it—to the state of war which has existed in Europe since August 1914. Clemenceau envisaged the Versailles Treaty as the mechanism for continuing the war in another way. He was perfectly right. His atavistic mind worked to a single end. For what is the state of Europe to-day but a state of latent war, preparing for the next eruption of the volcano? It is not a question of academic argument over the "origins of the war." It is a question of arresting processes making inevitably for a new catastrophe. It is not a question of apportioning the exact measure of responsibility to this or that set of rulers. It is a

question of wiping out the monstrous charge, and what has been built up on it, that one nation planned the war with cynical deliberation and launched it upon a world of innocents and fools.

I, therefore, make yet a further attempt to-day to force this issue to the front, convinced as I am that in the long last it is the ladder which civilisation must use in order to climb out of the pit. In the pages that follow I deal with one, and only with one, aspect of the falsehood which is gnawing at the entrails of Europe —*i.e.* the alleged building up by Germany before the war of a mechanism of aggression conceived on a scale so gigantic by comparison with the “defensive” mechanism of her neighbours as to place beyond doubt the purpose of her rulers to impose their will upon Europe by force of arms. In other words, what I propose to examine here is the evidence, on its main lines, of preparedness for war on the part of Germany and on the part of her neighbours in the years preceding the war. It is dry stuff. But it is the spinal marrow of the whole business.

## II

### THE BASIS OF THE “PLOT” CHARGE

As presented to the British public during the past eight years, the charge of sole responsibility for the war attributed to Germany has been based very largely upon her alleged enormous preparations relatively to those of her neighbours: thus indicating deliberate premeditation. These statements have been interwoven with professions of relative unpreparedness on our part and on the part of our Allies—particularly on our part. “We were all caught unprepared,” said Mr Lloyd George. Compare that statement of the politician with the statement of Sir Julian Corbett at the head of this pamphlet! It was a clever tactic, used partly to cover up Lord Grey’s secret dealings with France and Russia, and the extensive preparations for war in common by France, Russia and Britain which had been continuous, as we now know, from 1906 onwards (so far as France and ourselves were concerned), but which had been concealed from the British public. It captured our people the more completely inasmuch as they were genuinely amazed to find themselves at war. It was a magnificent recruiting call. Briefly this aspect of the charge has been that Germany, having planned and prepared the war over a long course of years in a way that no other Power had done, having built up an army enormously superior in numbers and equipment to the armies of her potential antagonists, let war

loose at the moment best calculated to ensure what Mr Asquith informed the country in October 1914 was the intention of her rulers—viz. “to dominate the European world.”<sup>1</sup> Later on Mr Lloyd George put the charge in more picturesque language :

What are we fighting for? To defeat the most dangerous conspiracy ever plotted against the liberty of nations, carefully, skilfully, insidiously, clandestinely planned in every detail with ruthless, cynical determination.

Thus Germany prepared for war to an extent so infinitely more complete than did the States to which she would be opposed in the event of war; her forces were so infinitely superior to those of her potential foes that, in a comparative sense, she was prepared and they were unprepared. No attempt was made to establish the truth of this general statement when the war broke out, and none has been made since. And yet to do so it was only necessary to demonstrate two things: (a) that Germany and her partner Austria had spent much larger sums upon their armies in combination, and Germany upon her navy, over a term of years preceding the war, than had the Powers which Germany must overthrow in order to “dominate the European world”—a period of five, ten, or twenty years might alternately have been chosen for the demonstration; (b) that when war broke out, the German army, or, if preferred, the German and Austrian armies were vastly more numerous, better equipped, better furnished with shells and small-arm ammunition than the Powers which Germany must overthrow to attain her purpose. I use the terms “vast” and “vastly” because they are of the essence of the case. If the charge of having planned and prepared the war in the sense in which Germany has been accused of doing so, if that charge be true, it is obvious that her expenditure on armament before the war must have been vastly in excess of anything her potential foes could show—even allowing for corruption in Russia and France. No slight excess on her side would have sufficed to make good the charge. The difference in the material evidence of preparedness between Germany and her neighbours must have been quite abnormal.

Now why has there been no attempt in eight years to make this demonstration by which all doubts could for ever have been silenced? The answer is that the material for such a demonstration does not exist, and never has existed. The demonstration

<sup>1</sup> He told us then that the Haldane-Bethmann-Hollweg conversations in Berlin had led him to form that conclusion. *Two years before he had told us that those same conversations had convinced him that our relations with Germany were, and would, he felt sure, be likely to remain, relations of amity and goodwill!*

was not made, and has not been made, because it could not be made. The charge is not only false, it is ludicrous. The boot is on the other leg. I am going to establish this. Let me hasten to add that it does not need establishing so far as persons in authority are concerned. They knew, and know, the facts. By persons in authority I mean the able professional brains that before the great catastrophe were dealing with these things and working out the great game in every capital. But it was necessary that our public should believe the legend. For the men who had gambled here, who had left, in Lord Loreburn's expressive phrase, "the peace of England at the mercy of the Russian Court," had gambled in the dark. The British public did not know that the gamble had been going on, so the British public had to be gulled in a specially comprehensive manner.

#### THE FACTS AS TO ARMAMENT EXPENDITURE

So far back as April 29th, 1915, I published in the *Labour Leader* the official figures of military expenditure for Germany, Austria, France and Russia during the decade preceding the war. They were republished in *Truth and the War*, which first appeared in 1916. On July 15th, 1915, I published in the same paper the official figures of naval expenditure of the same Powers during the same period.

No attempt was ever made to dispute these figures, which brought, and rightly, conviction to many minds as to the true character of the war. To-day we find Signor Nitti, who, as we have already noted, openly derides the legend of the German "plot," remarking:

"Nor is it true that armament expenses in the ten years preceding the war were greater in the Central Empires, or, to put it better, in the States forming the Triple Alliance than in the countries which later formed the European Entente."<sup>1</sup>

I subsequently published in *The Herald*,<sup>2</sup> then a weekly, the figures for the decade, 1895-1904, thus presenting the totals for twenty consecutive years preceding the war. Of these more ancient statistics I shall say nothing here except that the respective totals show exactly the same tendencies as the totals for the decade 1905-1914.

Now what did these figures reveal? They revealed that, so far from the expenditure on armaments by Germany and Austria during the ten years preceding the war having been vastly in

<sup>1</sup> *Peacelless Europe*.

<sup>2</sup> January 11th, 1919.

excess of the expenditure of the Franco-Russian combination, they were vastly inferior. They also showed that if the expenditure of Britain on armaments were added to the expenditure of the Franco-Russian combination, with which Britain had been secretly pledged to co-operate in the event of a war between the two Groups, even the word "vast" fell short of adequately describing the excess of the "Entente's" expenditure on armaments over the expenditure of the Teutonic Alliance. It may be argued that if the British expenditure be added to that of the Franco-Russian combination, then, in fairness, the Italian figures should be added to those of Germany and Austria. My answer is—"By all means add them, if you wish." The excess on the side of the "Entente" still remains vast. But, in point of fact, there would be no "fairness" in doing so, because—as we now know positively through the publication of the archives of the Austrian Foreign Office—Italy, in joining the Teutonic Alliance, made it clear that the contract would not bind her in the event of a collision between her partners and Britain. Indeed, when the Triple Alliance was first formed, the three Allies—Germany, Austria and Italy—were greatly desirous that Britain should join them formally. She did not do this, but for some years, under the guidance of Lord Salisbury, she may be described as having been a kind of sleeping partner in the Alliance. Of course, long before the war broke out, Italy had been weaned by Franco-British diplomacy, in fact, although not nominally, from allegiance to her partners. This became manifest when the war broke out, and the subsequently published Franco-Italian Treaty of 1901–1902 (French Yellow Book, 1920) dots the i's and crosses the t's. It was in 1902 that Delcassé stated in the French Chamber that Italy would never be found in arms against France.

#### THE FIGURES

It seems advisable that these figures should be reproduced to-day, for large as the sale of *Truth and the War* has been, and widely as these figures were reproduced, I find that very many persons are still ignorant of them. I present them again, in round numbers and in simpler form, in a series of Tables hereunder.

TABLE I

SEPARATE MILITARY EXPENDITURE OF AUSTRIA-HUNGARY, GERMANY,  
FRANCE AND RUSSIA IN THE DECADE 1905–1914

(*In millions sterling*)

Austria-Hungary	Germany	France	Russia
£235	£449	£348	£496

TABLE II

## COMBINED MILITARY EXPENDITURE OF THE TWO RIVAL GROUPS

A.	In the period 1905-1909 <sup>1</sup> (in millions sterling)					
	Teutonic combination . . . . .					£302
	Franco-Russian combination . . . . .					£367
B.	In the period 1910-1914 <sup>1</sup> (in millions sterling)					
	Teutonic combination . . . . .					£382
	Franco-Russian combination . . . . .					£477
C.	In the DECADE 1905-1914 (in millions sterling)					
	Teutonic combination . . . . .					£684
	Franco-Russian combination . . . . .					£844

TABLE III

## SEPARATE NAVAL EXPENDITURE OF AUSTRIA-HUNGARY, GERMANY, FRANCE AND RUSSIA IN THE DECADE 1905-1914

(In millions sterling)

Austria-Hungary £51 Germany £186 France £162 Russia £145

TABLE IV

NAVAL EXPENDITURE OF THE TWO RIVAL GROUPS IN THE  
DECADE 1905-1914  
(*In millions sterling*)

Teutonic combination	.	.	.	.	£237
Franco-Russian combination	.	.	.	.	£307

We arrive then at the following totals of combined military and naval expenditure by the two rival Groups in the ten years preceding the war. (In millions sterling.)

TABLE V

TOTAL MILITARY AND NAVAL EXPENDITURE OF THE TWO RIVAL GROUPS  
IN THE DECADE 1905-1914

Teutonic combination . . . .	£921
Franco-Russian combination . . . .	£1151

<sup>1</sup> These figures are presented in two quinquennial periods in order to show that in the five years immediately preceding the war the expenditure of the Franco-Russian combination, already in excess of the Austro-German in the five years 1905-1909, made a further upward bound.

Thus the expenditure of the Franco-Russian combination on armaments exceeded the expenditure of the Teutonic combination by £230 millions in the decade 1905-1914.<sup>1</sup>

In other words, it is not a case of Germany and her partner having spent far vaster sums than their potential foes before the war. *The truth is the exact opposite.* It should, moreover, be pointed out that the combination against which Germany and her partner would be opposed in the event of war—*e.g.*, the Franco-Russian—and against which Germany and her partner were arming, turned out, in the actual event, to be only part of the combination they had to face when the war came. The British Empire had been pledged to join the Franco-Russian combination by a section of the British Liberal Cabinet. The British and French Headquarters' Staff had been in active collaboration for making war in common since 1906. Not only so. But, as Lord Haldane shows clearly in his book,<sup>2</sup> Russian collaboration had, from the very first, been reckoned upon by the British and French Headquarters' Staffs. This applied also to the naval staffs of Britain and France, their respective navies having been strategically disposed in consequence. The naval arrangements were being completed by a special Anglo-Russian Naval Convention which Lord Grey was negotiating—although he denied it in Parliament and to the German Ambassador—at the very time that the war broke out.<sup>3</sup> Incidentally it may be remarked that although, before the war, the British people were supposedly the least “militarised” people in Europe, these secret commitments had made of them *the most heavily taxed people in the world for war purposes*. When the war came the average burden of taxation for war purposes borne by the British citizen was much heavier than the burden of the French, German, Austrian, Russian and Italian citizen.<sup>4</sup> Thus the real combination which Germany and Austria had to face was a Franco-Russian-British combination. Yet, in the decade preceding the war, their expenditure in preparedness for war fell far short even of the Franco-Russian expenditure. And, almost to the last, the German Government in its blindness was convinced that Britain would remain neutral.

<sup>1</sup> In the decade 1895-1904 the excess of the Franco-Russian combination was £281.

<sup>2</sup> *Before the War.*

<sup>3</sup> We have now full proof of this in the Isvolsky-Sazonov dispatches.

<sup>4</sup> The explanation was not merely to be sought in our tremendous excess of naval expenditure, but in the fact that our comparatively small voluntary army was much better paid and also that our army administration was the most costly in the world.

Thus, in so far as a long premeditated German plot to force war on Europe is based upon the allegation of a precedent vast surplusage of expenditure upon armaments, it collapses utterly when brought to the test of documentary examination.

#### MAN-POWER

But this is only one line of inquiry. A nation plotting to dominate Europe would not only spend far larger sums upon armaments in the years preceding war than its potential foes ; its available trained human element would be correspondingly greater. You don't start out to dominate your neighbours unless the strength of your armies is enormously superior. And this is precisely the charge brought against Germany in the Allied and Associated Note to the German Delegation at Versailles of May 20th, 1919, *on the strength of which Germany was treated as the sole responsible author of the war*. In that Note the following expressions occur :—

“A conspiracy against the peace of Europe,” carried out “confident in the crushing superiority of her army” . . . “a premeditated war . . . the result of acts deliberately committed with the intention of making it inevitable.”

Upon these foundations was the superstructure of the Versailles Treaty built.

The curious thing is that their absurdity was demonstrated a year before the war and by no less a person than the then British Secretary of State for War, General Seely. Asked in the House on June 5th, 1913, by Mr Hunt what additions had been made during the preceding two years to the peace strength of the armies of Russia, Austria, Germany and France, he furnished the following figures :—

TABLE VI

	Russia	France	Germany	Austria-Hungary
Additions made	75,000	—	38,373	58,505
Additions proposed	—	183,715	136,000	—
Present peace estab.	1,284,000	—	—	473,643
Future peace ,,	—	741,572 <sup>1</sup>	821,964 <sup>2</sup>	—

<sup>1</sup> Seely's figures do not include 60,000 African levies ; nor, apparently, 40,000 men of the “Auxiliary Service.”

<sup>2</sup> It is contended by Count Montgelas that this figure would only have been reached in October 1914, when the contingents under the new law were due to be called up (*Die Neue Zeit*, July 29th, 1921). The statement

Incomplete as these figures were, they showed an enormous numerical preponderance, not on the side of Germany and her partner, but on the side of her potential foes. Nevertheless, directly the war broke out the myth of a "gigantic" German army was revived. We now possess fuller information as to the relative Peace establishments of the rival armies before the war broke out and as to the strength of those armies on a war footing. (See "The Arming of Europe before the War," by General Count Max Montgelas in *Foreign Affairs* for July 1921.) The relative strengths were as follows:—

TABLE VII

PEACE STRENGTHS OF THE RIVAL ARMIES (INCLUDING OFFICERS) BEFORE  
THE WAR BROKE OUT

Teutonic Combination	Franco-Russian Combination
1,239,000	2,239,000 (Summer strength)
	2,639,000 (Winter strength)

TABLE VIII

STRENGTH OF THE RIVAL ARMIES ON A WAR FOOTING ON THE  
OUTBREAK OF WAR

Teutonic Combination	Franco-Russian Combination
3,358,000	5,070,000 <sup>1</sup>

(The Teutonic combination was superior in heavy guns (732 against 592), and inferior in the lighter horse, field and mountain artillery (7368 against 10,624).)

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is easily refutable if inaccurate, which it is hardly likely to be, for neither the authority nor the accuracy of that writer has to my knowledge ever been questioned, and his well-known views on the war invest his technical and political writings with a rare impartiality.

The text of the German Law of July 1913, which must have been known to Colonel Seely, or, at least, to his advisers, ran as follows:—

"The peace strength of the German army in men (exclusive of one year's volunteers) is to be gradually increased in such a way that it shall reach 661,176 in the Budget year (April 1st, 1915—March 31st, 1916), and shall remain such until March 31st, 1916."

To the figure of 661,176 should be added 16,000 volunteers for one year, 105,000 non-coms., 36,000 officers (including medical), 4000 technical officers, bringing up the total to 822,000—roughly, Seely's figure.

<sup>1</sup> On July 1st, 1916, the approximate strength of the fighting armies was, on the side of the Teutonic combination, then reinforced by Turkey and Bulgaria, 9535 millions; on the side of the Franco-Russian combination, then reinforced by the British Empire, Italy, Belgium, Serbia and Rumania and the French African troops, 13,976 millions. In July 1917 the relative strengths were 10,350 as against 13,884.

It is interesting to note that every British military writer prior to August

But the most astounding fact which French publications reveal is that, when the war broke out, *the French Army alone was numerically as strong as the German!* This revelation lends additional significance to the confidence and willingness with which the rulers of France contemplated the possibility of war from 1912 onwards—*i.e.* from the moment they felt sure that the British Government was too deeply involved in the Franco-Russian combination to get out of it, and that the Government of the Tsar was determined upon war when its preparations (which from the autumn of 1912 onwards assumed enormous proportions) were completed. This confidence (to use a mild term) is visible in the declarations of Poincaré to Isvolsky, and in his language at Petrograd; in the narrative of Paleologue, the French Ambassador to Russia; in the statements of Cambon, the French Ambassador in London to Benckendorff, the Russian Ambassador in London, and in many other records which have seen the light in the past three years. Let us examine the matter further.

#### THE REVELATIONS OF GENERAL BUAT

General Buat, attached during the war to the Intelligence Division of the French General Staff, is categorical on this point of truly capital importance. In his recent book<sup>1</sup> he estimates the peace strength of the German army in 1914 at 870,000, while that of the French army he gives as 910,000, including 63,000 African levies. Thus, this French expert admits that the French army was stronger than the German by 40,000 men. He goes on:

“France alone at the beginning of the war was at least equal in strength to, if not stronger than, her mighty opponent as regards the larger units.”

Moreover, France alone, despite her smaller population (39·16 millions; Germany, 65–66 millions), possessed, when the war broke out, a somewhat larger supply of trained men of military age (without counting her African levies) than Germany: this is partly accountable for the fact that by extending her age of service to forty-eight, and by calling up her recruits at twenty instead of twenty-one, under the Three Years Law, France had

1914 appears to have been agreed that Russia's **First Line**, and active (not ultimate) reserves, were about 1½ millions in excess of the German and about 3 millions in excess of the Austrian.

<sup>1</sup> Buat was Major-General of the French armies when the Armistice was signed. His book is *L'armée allemande pendant la guerre de 1914–1918* (Paris: Chapelot). See, too, the comments upon it in *Let France Explain*, by F. Bausman, formerly Member of the Supreme Court of the State of Washington (London: George Allen & Unwin).

three yearly contingents more than Germany, and that prior to the German army law of 1913, only 55 per cent. of available recruits in Germany were actually called up (after that law the proportion was 68 per cent.), while in France the proportion was 75 per cent.

General Buat is equally explicit on this. He says :

**"It is not only inaccurate to say that in 1914 Germany made the greatest effort of which she was capable, but when the difference in the size of the respective populations is considered, it is equally wrong to maintain that Germany went as far as France in the utilisation of her reserves."**

Of course Germany's ultimate reserves were larger than those of France.

Another very interesting statement of Buat's is this :

"In Germany the number of conscripts which were yearly recognised as fit for service largely exceeded the number of effectives which the Budget provided for incorporation into the army (*armée active*). In consequence, the severest physical tests were applied to the recruits. In 1911 alone, out of 1,200,000 millions of young men who came before the military authorities, more than 700,000 were set aside. *Thus a considerable number of men, quite physically usable, were excluded from active service.*"

Now what in non-technical language does all this mean ? It means that Germany, which, it seems, was plotting the war, and which, "confident in the crushing superiority of her army," was "weaving the most dangerous conspiracy ever plotted against the liberty of nations"—that the military effort this nation was actually making for war *was notably less than the similar effort of only one of its potential foes*. France was straining every nerve of war preparedness, and Germany obviously *was not*, on the testimony, mind you, of her enemies ! The re-establishment by France in 1913 of the three years' term of service had, as now admitted by the French themselves, given her a slightly larger peace strength establishment than Germany's. Buat is contemptuous of Germany for not making a *pre-war* effort comparable to that of France ! Had she done so, he says, she could have formed "an additional 600,000 men into divisions." With this increase of strength, he argues, the German General Staff could at the beginning of the campaign have extended its flanking movement round the left of the Anglo-French forces to the North Sea coast and the English Channel ; the towns nearest to England could have been occupied, and a battle on the Marne would have been impossible. Thus the facts are seen to be that the French armies were numerically as strong as the German, while between them the French and Russian armies outnumbered the German and Austrian by more than one million and a half.

The extent and the significance of France's war preparedness was pointed out in a remarkable dispatch to his Government by the Belgian Minister in Paris on June 12th, 1913.

"It is now certain, therefore, that the French legislature is about to be burdened with measures that the country *will scarcely be able to bear for long*. The burden of the new law (Three Years Military Service Law) will fall so heavily upon the population, the expenditure which it will involve will be so exorbitant that there will soon be an outcry in the country, and France will be faced with this dilemma: either renounce what she cannot bear to forgo, or else war at short notice. Heavy will be the responsibility of those who have brought the country to this pass. They are followed with a sort of infatuation, a kind of frenzy which is interesting, but deplorable."

And that is the country which was taken by surprise and fell victim to a "German plot" planned against unsuspecting neighbours! That the country which was "wantonly attacked"!

How fooled we have been by our rulers!

Let me sum up. Investigation on two specific lines of inquiry relating to war preparedness—expenditure in war preparations, and man-power—shows that the nation which has been charged with sole responsibility for the war spent vastly less sums upon armaments in the ten years preceding the war, that its armies were numerically no stronger than those of *one* of its two redoubtable opponents, and that before the war it was using 20 per cent. less of its man-power than that opponent as potential cannon-fodder. What remains of the legend of the intensive and pre-meditated preparedness to "dominate the European world" with which Mr Asquith and his colleagues bamboozled the public, the better to conceal their long disloyalty to the British people? But there is a third line of inquiry now open to investigation by French and German official publications.

#### PRE-WAR EQUIPMENT

German premeditation, it is alleged, is proved by the fabulous quantities of weapons and ammunition her military authorities had collected prior to the war, for the purpose of subjugating Europe . . . and other Continents. The long list of German weapons of war which the Allies have caused to be destroyed since the Armistice, enumerated by Mr Lloyd George at Birmingham in the spring of last year, and more recently by General Nollet (President of the Commission for the Disarmament of Germany), has lent additional colour to this side of the "German plot"

charge. It never seems to have occurred to those who in this country have been impressed by this formidable list that the great bulk of the articles enumerated therein represented accumulations gradually built up during the war, *not before the war*. Yet one would have thought that this was sufficiently obvious even to people who know nothing about military questions. The legend of a vast German excess of *pre-war equipment* no more survives examination than the legend of a vast German excess of *pre-war armament expenditure*, or the legend of a vast German *pre-war superiority in man-power*.

Every belligerent army, including the German, ran short of ammunition very early in the war. That fact is nowhere really disputed and suffices in itself to dispose of the legend. We know what our own position was. The French were in a bad way. The Germans were in no better case. Indeed they were in far worse case, because, owing to the British command of the seas, we and our Allies had America's resources to draw upon, while our enemies had to rely exclusively upon their own efforts. But how early the deficit began to show itself in the German armies and how serious it was is only now apparent by the official documents which were published last spring in Germany, and which are now understood to be before the German Parliamentary Inquiry into the history of the war.<sup>1</sup> Thus we find the Chief of the General Staff calling attention (on August 13th, 1914) to the "waste of ammunition exceeding all expectation" during the first encounters on the Western front, and demanding that "immediate steps be taken for the manufacture of ammunition of all arms"; the War Office urging (September 13th, 1914) that it is a "special duty for all officers concerned to insist on economy (in ammunition)." An almost frantic appeal is sent out from Headquarters in the field on the same date for an increase in the output of ammunition: "The importance of this question is such that any imaginable means would be justified." Before the end of that month (September 1914) *the entire reserve stocks of pre-war ammunition had been exhausted*, as is clear from the report of the Quartermaster-General on the Western front.<sup>2</sup> The field armies were still fully supplied, but no *pre-war stock* was left in

<sup>1</sup> Unterausschus des Parlamentarischen Untersuchungsausschusses (First Sub-Commission of the Parliamentary Inquiry Committee).

<sup>2</sup> Amongst these documents is a letter from General Falkenhey, Prussian Minister of War to the Chancellor (Bethmann-Hollweg), dated July 1914, insisting upon the urgent necessity of increasing the stock of artillery ammunition. But he asks that 20 million *marks* should be set aside for this in the Budgets of 1915-1916-1917. *He asks for nothing for 1914, the year that Germany had completed her "plot."*

the depots in Germany. Further reports show not only that the *pre-war* stock of rifles was exhausted *before the war had lasted two months*, but that new manufacture could not keep pace with requirements, that captured rifles had to be extensively used, and that the new formations in Germany had to be partly trained with captured rifles. On September 23rd, 1914, Krupps are peremptorily instructed that home orders must have preference over all others. On September 30th, the Chief of the Ammunition Department informs the Commander of the 2nd Army Corps that field batteries and heavy batteries must be restricted to six to eight rounds *per gun per diem*. Indeed so provenly insufficient were the German *pre-war* stocks of ammunition for all arms that we observe in these documents the German military authorities defending themselves against the charge of neglect on the ground that in view of the small annual consumption of ammunition in peace time the accumulation of big stocks would have led to deterioration and waste. As the war went on, all *pre-war* machine guns had to be scrapped and replaced by improved patterns. A new field gun had to be brought out to compete with the superior French gun. *Most of the guns of various kinds destroyed by the Allies since the Armistice must have been not of pre-war construction, but constructed during the war.* Thus we observe from these documents that the mine projectors of newest design date from late in 1918; the new gun of the field artillery was constructed in 1916; the heavy long-range howitzer and the long mortar were constructed during the war, not before the war; hand-grenades and rifle-grenades were *post* the outbreak of, not *pre*, war; gas fighting was, of course, an entirely new form of warfare developed during the war by the Germans initially; and so was the tank—by us.

Perhaps the most remarkable disclosure which is now made—as remarkable in its way as the now officially admitted slight *pre-war* numerical superiority of the French army alone over the German—is that the *pre-war* stocks of ammunition in France and Germany respectively show a decided superiority on the French side for all arms except the heavy field artillery, where, as already pointed out, the superiority in numbers, and consequently in munitions, was on the German side. The figures are given in the accompanying Table (p. 26). The French figures can be obtained from reports published during the war in the *Journal Officiel*.<sup>1</sup> The German figures have

<sup>1</sup> Notably the Raiberti report of December 2nd, 1916, on the distribution and expenditure of artillery munitions in the years 1914, 1915 and 1916, and the Lebrun report of March 1916 on the infantry munitions (see Appendix to *Journal Officiel* of December 18th, 1919).

been published in the German *Democratic Correspondence*, from official documents submitted to the German Parliamentary Inquiry.

TABLE IX

STOCKS OF AMMUNITION IN FRANCE AND GERMANY RESPECTIVELY UPON THE OUTBREAK OF WAR

	<i>Infantry</i> (Cartridges in millions)	<i>Field Artillery</i> (Rounds in Millions)
France	1310	5680
Germany	970	5200

In a Memorandum commenting upon these figures, Count Montgelas points out that 10 per cent. of the German total should be deducted from the German stocks as compared with the French (*i.e.* in considering the relative munition strength of the French and German armies on the Western—French—front), in view of the fact that at the outbreak of the war one-tenth of the German army (9 divisions out of  $85\frac{1}{3}$ ) were concentrated on the Eastern front, which force was, of course, considerably increased later. Count Montgelas's contention seems a fair one—at least I know of no answer to it. If it be regarded as such, Germany faced the war with stocks of field artillery and infantry ammunition notably inferior to those of *one* of her foes alone.

It would be interesting to know what the Russian stocks were! But how in the face of all this the preposterous fiction of Germany's overwhelming proportionate preparedness for war, as indicative of a policy to overrun and dominate Europe, can any longer be believed by any person of ordinary intelligence is beyond comprehension.

## IN CONCLUSION

Remember what the charge is on the strength of which this Babylonian Peace, which is ruining us and all Europe, has been imposed upon Germany. Not that Germany prepared for war. No one but a lunatic would suggest that she did not. There was nothing secret about her preparations, as there was about the Russian preparations. *No one made it a grievance against her that she prepared.* Indeed Mr Lloyd George himself went out of his way on two occasions to explain to his own countrymen how

justified she was in doing so.<sup>1</sup> But that she prepared for war in a way in which no other nation did—spent far vaster sums during

<sup>1</sup> At the Queen's Hall, July 28th, 1908 :

"I want to put two considerations to you from the German point of view. . . . Men have not got the imagination to project themselves into the position of the other party. Now just consider for a moment. You say, 'Why should Germany be frightened of us? Why should she build because of us?' Let me put two considerations to you. We started it; it is not they who have started. We had an overwhelming preponderance at sea which could have secured us against any conceivable enemy. We were not satisfied. We said: 'Let there be *Dreadnoughts*.' . . . Well, let me put another consideration before you which I don't think is sufficiently pointed out. We always say we must have what we call a 'two-Power standard.' What does that mean? You must have a Navy large enough to oppose a combination of any two naval Powers. So, if we had Russia and France, Germany and France, Germany and Italy, we should always have a fleet large enough to defend our shores against any combination of the two greatest naval Powers in Europe. This has been our standard. Look at the position of Germany. Her army is to her what our navy is to us—her sole defence against invasion. She has not got a two-Power standard. She may have a stronger army than France, than Russia, than Italy, than Austria, *but she is between two great Powers who, in combination, could pour in a vastly greater number of troops than she has.* Don't forget that, when you wonder why Germany is frightened at alliances and understandings, and some sorts of mysterious workings which appear in the Press, and hints in *The Times* and *Daily Mail*. . . . Here is Germany in the middle of Europe, *with France and Russia on either side, and with a combination of armies greater than hers.* Suppose we had a possible combination which would lay us open to invasion—suppose Germany and France, or Germany and Austria, had fleets which, in combination, would be stronger than ours. Would we not be frightened? Would we not build? Would we not arm? Of course we should."

And on January 1st, 1914, in *The Daily Chronicle* :

"The German army is vital, not merely to the existence of the German Empire, *but to the very life and independence of the nation itself, surrounded, as Germany is, by other nations, each of which possesses armies as powerful as her own.* . . . Germany has nothing which approximates to a two-Power standard. She has, therefore, become alarmed by recent events, and is spending huge sums of money on the expansion of her military resources."

"Alarmed by recent events"? Yes. What "recent events"? The accumulating evidence of the determination of the Tsardom to force a European war in order to promote its secular ambitions and save itself by a military triumph from internal dissolution, and the determination of the men at the head of affairs in France to support the Tsardom in its purpose—facts probably known to Mr Lloyd George then, and which are now known to the world by the publication of the Russian Imperial archives, the revelations of the French Ambassador at Petrograd, the *Memoirs* of Baron Rosen, the late Russian Ambassador at Washington, and a host of other documents.

long preparatory years, accumulated far vaster supplies of ammunition for long preparatory years, disposed of far larger armies—all this, as I have shown, is false. Hers and her partner's expenditure was less than that of her rivals. Her "gigantic" armies were no larger than those of France. Her war material and stocks of ammunition, with the exception of the heavy artillery, were less than those of France. No doubt her army was extraordinarily well organised and generally efficient. Her rapidity of mobilisation was greater—a matter of organisation. It may be argued that her high command at the opening of the war, at any rate, was better instructed in the art of war. But this has nothing to do with the charge brought against her: these are matters partly of national psychology, historical experiences and geographical position. Moreover, her comparatively superior efficiency was by no means universally credited. Three years before the war, after attending the German army manœuvres, Colonel Repington, the military correspondent of *The Times*, wrote in that paper (October 28th, 1911) :

"The writer has not formed a wholly favourable opinion of the German army, which appears to him to be living on a glorious past, and to be unequal to the respect in which it is commonly held. . . . *The artillery, with its out-of-date material and slow and ineffective methods of fire, appeared so inferior that it can have no pretension to measure itself against the French on anything approaching level terms.* . . . *The nation which, after all, gives up little more than half of its able-bodied sons to the army is becoming less militarised.*"

*That* was Bernhardi's lament—Bernhardi, who had such a poor reading public in Germany when he published his book, and such a magnificent *clientèle* outside his country when he was unearthed for Allied propaganda purposes as typifying the militaristic soul of a people which "after all gives up little more than half of its able-bodied sons to the army"! Germany, Bernhardi complained, had "become a peace-loving, an almost too peace-loving people." Peace aspirations, he protested, "threaten to poison the soul of the German people." As a fire-eating professional he had a just grievance. For forty years preceding the war Germany had fought no war except the campaign against the South-West African Hottentots. Austria had been at peace. In that period France had been fighting a whole series of colonial wars—in China, in Madagascar, in North and West Africa, and had twice nearly come into violent collision with Britain. Russia had fought one great war against Japan, apart from colonial wars in Western Asia. Italy had fought two large-scale colonial wars, in Abyssinia and Tripoli. We had fought one great war against

the Boers, and many colonial wars—Matabeleland, Ashanti, Burmah, etc.

On its western flank this people “becoming less militarised” had a virile, intelligent foe whose history is the most military in the world—France. France was in military alliance with Russia, whose peace effectives were double those of Germany, and which had a population of 175,000,000 compared to Germany’s 66,000,000 to draw upon. These partners had succeeded in binding the British Empire in terms of an “obligation of honour” contracted through secret military and naval understanding, in the case of France, of eight years’ standing, to fling its mighty strength into the scale on their behalf. To that secret obligation no conditions were attached—not even the condition that our Franco-Russian partners should take no steps in diplomacy or action—*i.e.* by mobilising—without our consent! Russia’s general mobilisation was equivalent to a declaration of war by the very terms of the Franco-Russian military agreement, according to the military authors of the agreement themselves, in whose views the Tsar concurred.<sup>1</sup> And Lord Grey said he did not know the terms of that agreement when he made his famous “war” speech in the House on August 3rd, 1904.

Thus in the West was Germany faced by a foe whose rulers in the years immediately preceding the great catastrophe had resolved, in the interests of their own secular feud with Germany, to support Imperial Russia in its determination to force war—when it was ready; and Imperial Russia had declared itself ready, through the mouth of its War Minister, in the spring of 1914. In the East, by a foe whose shadow had loomed portentous over Europe for a century, driven by dynastic necessities to engage in a successful war, with Constantinople as its objective, “to be reached through Berlin” over prostrate Austria-Hungary; a foe—be it remarked incidentally—which, within a month of the outbreak, had defeated two German armies, poured 600,000 troops into Germany, and overrun East Prussia up to the Vistula, so well prepared that we find Colonel Repington exclaiming in *The Times* of August 29th, 1914 :

“In its first battles the Russian army has displayed splendid vigour, and a capacity for the offensive exceeding all expectations. Remembering the seasons, and all they mean, Russia must reach Berlin within a couple of months, and if, at the end of that time, our claws are still fast in the German armies on the West, and Serbia has still her teeth in Austria’s back, the strategical and political objects of the war will soon be achieved.”

By what errors of policy, of calculation, of deportment, of

<sup>1</sup> French Yellow Book.

almost pathetic disingenuousness on the part of Germany's incompetent governors that situation had been reached is irrelevant to this discussion. It suffices that that *was* the situation.

But take that situation into account ; examine, in the light of it, all the statistical information given in this pamphlet, and ask yourselves whether in all history there has been so astounding a misrepresentation of facts—attended, thanks to modern propaganda resources and to the almost incredible blundering of German diplomacy, with such amazing success, as to induce belief in a German "plot" to subjugate Europe on the ground of a vast and premeditated military preparedness to achieve this end.

What conceivable national interest can now be served by allowing that misrepresentation to persist, when the so-called Peace Treaty which embodies it is destroying our industries and keeping nearly two millions of our working classes wholly or partially unemployed, and when its perpetuation is producing conditions in Europe which must infallibly promote war—probably in the life-time of those who read this pamphlet ?

If we are not moved by a sense of anger at the deception practised upon us, and for which so many of our best and bravest have died ; if we are not moved by a sense of shame that an injustice which we continue to tolerate shall be perpetrated in our name ; then, at least, let us be moved by what we regard as a pre-eminent national characteristic—common sense.

Since this pamphlet was written, the Minutes of the Conferences between the heads of the French and Russian Military Staffs held at Krasnoe-Selo, in 1911, 1912 and 1913, have become accessible. They will appear in the second volume of Russian State documents shortly to be issued at Moscow. A summary of them was published in *The Daily Herald*. The full text of the 1911 Conference appeared in *Foreign Affairs* for September 1922. They complete the exposure of the alleged unpreparedness of France and Russia.

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